



GUAM ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • *AHENSIAN PRUTEKSIÓN LINA'LA' GUÁHAN*
LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO • GOVERNOR OF GUAM | JOSHUA F. TENORIO • LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF GUAM
WALTER S. LEON GUERRERO • ADMINISTRATOR | MICHELLE C. R. LASTIMOZA • DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Guam EPA Issues Notice to Proceed for Cocos Lagoon Tire Reef Removal and Disposal Project

March 29, 2021 (Tiyan, Guam) – On Friday, March 26, 2021, the Guam Environmental Protection Agency (Guam EPA) issued a Notice to Proceed to UEG, Inc. dba Unitek Environmental Guam for professional services to start the Cocos Lagoon Tire Reef Removal and Disposal Project. The contractual agreement for the professional services contract was signed and approved by Governor Lou Leon Guerrero on March 15.

“The removal and disposal of this artificial tire reef in Cocos Lagoon provides an important step toward preventing any further damage to surrounding marine habitats and communities in and around the lagoon,” said Guam EPA administrator Walter S. Leon Guerrero. “This project should help shed some light on the importance of removing and preventing marine debris from harming our island’s marine resources.”

The fixed firm price contract is valued at \$250,000, and is funded by a competitive grant award issued in fiscal year 2019 to Guam EPA from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Debris Program.

The installation of the coral artificial reef took place in the in the early 1970s as an experimental project with the intention of increasing fish stocks through the creation of an artificial habitat. The Guam Department of Agriculture discontinued the practice of using the artificial reef after it was determined that fish stock levels did not improve after the installment of the reef.

UEG will be responsible for management, labor, tools, equipment, supplies, off island disposal and applicable permits associated with the removal project of approximately 2,000 tires from the failed artificial reef experiment performed in the Cocos Lagoon in Merizo. UEG expects to start the project this June, with a targeted completion by this August.

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For more information about this release, please contact Guam EPA Public Information Officer Nic Rupley Lee at 300-4753 or nic.rupley@epa.guam.gov